2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

157 624 551 Se-ma-naw, the youngest wife of the civil chief, possessed a cheerful and lively disposition, always frolicsome as the young antelope of the prairie. She was the daughter of the war chief of the tribe, *Sa-was-saw*, the Bear, and niece of An-a-wak-ke-o, who was her father's sister. The name of the prophet was *Han-na-nos-ka-a*, signifying the wisest of the wise.

622 157 The Rolling Thunder possessed a remarkably inquisitive mind, and was, moreover, extremely sociable. In the course of his life, he had several times crossed the borders of the Indian territory into Mexico, and had some faint notions of civilization—just enough to excite his curiosity. Hour after hour he would converse with me in his tent about the manners and customs of the whites. On these occasions, I endeavored to illustrate, in the best possible manner, their superiority and power. With a piece of charcoal, I would sketch on a sheet of birch bark the figure of a ship, "with wings whiter than a swan's and wider than many eagles"—its masts taller than the tallest cedar on the mountains—representing it as capable of carrying more than a thousand pack mules could bear; that in this great canoe, the white man would sail away over the salt water, beyond the sight of land, to a vast continent, distant more than a hundred days' journey to the east. He had never seen the [173] ocean; nevertheless, he comprehended its vastness through the traditions of his fathers, who once dwelt upon its shore; but no logic could convince him that the mighty land beyond it was a part of this globe; his reasoning leading him irresistably to the conclusion that it must necessarily belong 823 to another planet. When I told him the earth was round like a ball, and on the opposite side were extensive countries and millions of people—that if we could bore a hole through it directly beneath our feet, we would emerge into

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
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those countries, he laughed me to scorn, arguing that its 823
inhabitants would have to walk with their heads downward, and must necessarily fall off; besides, the premise upon which rested the superstructure of the argument was false, inasmuch as the earth was not round, but flat, a fact patent to the naked eye.

I described a train of cars, wooden tents placed above 000
rolling wheels, filled with a crowd of people outnumbering all his tribe, forced by the power of steam, such as he saw rise from the water boiling in his kettle, along an iron trail, faster than he ever saw the wild horse run across the prairie —endeavored to explain how they could converse, however distant from each other, through the marvelous electric telegraph, describing the immensity of their towns, the number of their warriors; in fine, whether under his own tent in the village, or encamped on the prairie after a day's hunt, he was constantly interrogating me upon some subject connected with their manners, customs, or inventions. Usually, 186
when I had concluded, the old man would remain silent a long time, absorbed in deep study, from which he would, at length, arouse and exclaim—"Wonderful! wonderful! are the works of the white man, but the Great Spirit will destroy them all!"

The Rolling Thunder evidently entertained a favorable 584
opinion of me. This was shown soon after my arrival in his camp, by insisting that I should take a wife. I took the matter into serious consideration, endeavoring to decide in my own mind what effect it might have on the chances of escape. The conclusion was that the effect would be favorable, and, accordingly, I signified to the chief that "Barkis was willin'."

The next step was to make a selection from the dusky daughters of the tribe, a matter about which I felt dis-

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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and insects were attributed certain powers by someone. One of the very few animals known to the Comanches which never gave supernatural power was the horse. Although of extreme economic value, horses had no place in the ceremonial life of the tribe; nor did they ever appear in visions or significant dreams except as incidental details. This was also true of the dog. It would seem that the dog and horse, as everyday parts of the Comanche household, were too profane to be thought of as power givers. Man had control of them. Givers of power had to be outside his realm of dominance.

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Just as animals, birds, and insects might be guardian spirits, so was any unusual phenomenon of nature likely to be the abiding place of a spirit. Some of these places, because of the extraordinary power of the spirit abiding within, became rather famous among the Comanches. One such place is Medicine Mounds.

Medicine Mounds are a line of rounded hills in Hardman County, Texas, between the Pease and the Red rivers. They are rather conspicuous, the cones rising about 350 feet above the surrounding plain. Flanking them to the west is a gully-washed scar of an ancient buffalo trail. On the top of the highest of the four mounds is a flat cap rock, a protector against erosion. It was believed by the Comanches to be the dwelling place of a powerful and benevolent spirit.

A Comanche medicine man first discovered its great power when once his band came to hunt in the vicinity of the mounds. He had a young and beautiful daughter who was ill of fever and was growing weaker day by day. Her father had sucked worms and evil spirits out of many a brave and many a squaw, had chanted away the pains of many a girl, and had smoked the weakness from many a boy, but he could not cure his own daughter. He had rattled his gourd all night long while he prayed and chanted. From his medicine bundle he had prepared cures, while the moon was dark and while it was full. He had mixed and tried his formulae in every way he knew. He had consulted other medicine men. But all without results. One morning he came out of his tipi and in despair was gazing silently into the distance when suddenly his eyes came to rest on the rock-capped peak of the highest mound. Here was a powerful spirit that could help him, he thought. So without touching water or food, he went apart to pray and fast until the spirit should send him a revelation. At length

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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it came. He was instructed to take his medicines to the high rock and there mix them so that the power of the good spirit should enter into them. He prepared the medicine as directed by the vision, gave it to his daughter, and then again went out and prayed to the mound spirit—prayed with the patience of those who live under the sun, and watch shadows, and note day by day the greening and the browning of the grass. At length he heard the voice of his daughter. He bounded into the tipi. Her eye was bright, her color almost healthy. She had slept deeply, she said. From that hour she mended steadily and soon was able to return to her work.

Thereafter this medicine man made regular visits to the mound, made offerings to the mound spirit, and performed his cures through its aid. The fame of the mound spirit spread. Other medicine men came. From the gypsum waters of a spring at the base of the mounds, the ailing Comanches came to drink. The spirit came to be a protector for the Comanche bands. Here it could view the country for miles around, and from this lofty point directed arrows of hunters to the vitals of buffalo and deflected those of enemies shot at his wards, the Comanches. And today the name of the four extraordinary hills lined against the ancient buffalo trail that runs down to Pease River remains as a testimonial of the associations they had for the native people who lived by and vanished with the buffalo—Medicine Mounds.[19]

Medicine Bluff is another place commemorated in name and held in great reverence by the Comanches as being the abode of a powerful, benevolent spirit. It is located in Comanchería at the confluence of Cache and Medicine Bluff creeks. The two creeks empty into Red River and are overlooked by a precipitous bluff—Medicine Bluff. It is a mile in length, forming a perfect crescent, rising at once from the bed of Medicine Bluff creek, which flows at the base of the perpendicular scarp, to the height of 310 feet. The surface of the face of the bluff is perfectly regular and smooth. Moss covers the sides with a garb of pale green. The greater portion of the face is perfectly bare, though at some places a few stunted cedars have found lodgment in the crevices. From the rear the bluff presents three knolls, the center one being the highest. Mount Scott, about eight miles dis-

[19] J. Frank Dobie, "Stories in Texas Place Names," *Straight Texas*, 32–34.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4. 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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tant, stands forth with its pyramidal outline like a sentinel guarding the eastern gate of the Wichita Mountains.

There, from the bluff, according to a Comanche legend recounted by Thomas Battey, a powerful spirit looked over and cared for his people, saw that game was abundant and that his children were prosperous and happy. Comanche medicine men erected a cairn about six feet in height upon the summit of the principal knoll. Here the sick repaired or were brought by their relatives or friends, and here they were left to its invisible and subtle power. Especially those who were past the cure of the medicine men were deposited on the altar and left to be disposed of by the spirit. If the sick had not offended the supernatural powers, they were suddenly healed and returned to their kindred. Sometimes they were transported bodily to the after world. But if they were notoriously bad, they were allowed to die, and the ravens descended from the air, and the wolf came up from the valley and devoured the body, and the bones were gathered up by the Evil Spirit and deposited in the land of terrors.[20] At times the vicinity of the bluff became suddenly lighted up as by a great fire. The dews of night, the rain, and the wind circled about the spot of the altar at the very summit, but none of these agencies of nature trespassed, and the patient was thus left sheltered better than in his own tipi.

To the spirit was attributed the power of resurrection. Once an old warrior, who had long lived among the women of the village, having ceased to hunt or go on the warpath and having been turned out to wait his time to join his fathers, had struggled to the top of the bluff to die and be borne away to the after world. Each night after his departure, when darkness covered the face of nature, the awe-stricken people of the village below observed a great blaze, as if a fire had been built to alarm them. On the morning after the third night, a young man equipped as a warrior was seen descending the bluff, along the trail to the village. He approached the chief's lodge and sat by the fire. The warriors gathered around, but no one recognized him and so remained silent, waiting for him to speak. Lighting his pipe, decorated with beads and feathers of strange birds, the stranger, after all had made the ceremonial smoke, began his story.

When he had reached the top of the hill, he could see the village

[20] We read this to be un-Comanche-like embroidery supplied by Battey.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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and hear the laughter of children, the mourning of his kindred, and the barking of the dogs. He could see the buffalo and deer in the distance, and the young warriors in all their pride and strength. Then he asked himself, "Why do I live any longer? My fires have gone out. I must follow my fathers. The world is beautiful to the young, but to the old it has no pleasures. Far away to the setting suns are the hunting grounds of my people. I will go there." After these words, he had mustered all he could of his failing strength and leaped into the air from the giddy height before him. He knew no more of the woes of life. He was caught up in midair and transported into a smiling country where there was no rain and no wind, where the great chiefs of all the Comanches were assembled. They were all young and chased the buffalo and feasted. There was no darkness. The Great Spirit was everywhere and everybody was happy.

The story captivated the minds and imagination of the listeners, and the strange young warrior became at once an oracle and a big medicine man in the tribe. His counsel was all-powerful, and his abilities to cure were considered infallible. Reverence for the bluff was enhanced; and in the years that followed no Comanche would ascend to the summit of the hill except for a most sacred purpose. When white soldiers fired shots at the cliff to hear the echoes, the Comanche guide, Blue Leggings, was horror stricken, and he refused to scale the peak with the soldiers, saying, "Me no sick!"[21]

At times a young man, eager to take the warpath for the first time, ascended to the sacred spot in quest of his vision. Having provided himself with a shield, in accordance with ceremonial instructions the youth proceeded to the highest point of the bluff, remaining for three successive days. A part of the ceremony included presenting the face of the shield to the rising sun each morning, as if warding off an arrow or a spear. The sacred surroundings of the place and the Sun, the emblem of the Great Spirit, casting its rays upon the shield were supposed to endow it with supernatural protective powers.

On principle no Comanche worshiped the entire animal life or physical phenomena of his country. But accounts of recent and legendary visions prove that no wild species or type can be ruled out as a possible source of power. The world view precluded nothing from

[21] Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 98.

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C K 795 177 [787] consider here how the attitudes toward peyote itself have changed. The meeting as I have seen it conforms in most details to the descriptions given by Mooney, LaBarre, and Slotkin, allowing of course for regional variations. On the other hand there seems to be a marked change in the effects of peyote. Less importance is attached to the vision and there is hardly any evidence of people passing out, etc.

C K 787 177 [756] Many of the older peyotists also had power of the older sort and even John Pahdoponi and Bill Saupitty have been healers apart from their peyote functions. I have asked concerning the fate of the old forms of power working on the supposition that if it were real it would not have dissappeared into thin air in the minds of the present day peyotists. It seems that power came to an individual through the intervention of the supernatural being in those specific situations we may call quests. Due to the coming of the White culture, the proper conditions for the quest were destroyed, i.e., sanctified areas, silence, natural surroundings. The Wichita Mountains were

C K 823 778 [787] the traditional areas for receiving power. The bands did not camp in the mountains, nor did they travel through them on their way to raid or war. This holy ground was open for small day light excursions (berry picking, etc.) and for inter-tribal travel along the "peace trail". Other than these activities the area was respected as holy

C K 823 778 177 [795] and used only for the search for power. In spite of the changes since the White inroads, many of the mountains are considered haunted and ghosts still abound in popular Comanche and Kiowa parlance. The older Indians do not travel far into the mountains and do not camp out there. Dreams are still a great topic of interest in spite of the

C K 787 fact that they cannot confer power. One is liable to dream more often and more vividly while in the mountains. The dream is still able to impart a message if the dreamer is able to interpret it.

C K 276 795 778 [787] Peyote, in the early days, also had power. This because of its manifest healing properties and because of the visions one could

30: Levy E-5 (ca. 1957) 1958 NO6 Comanche NO6
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C K 829 177 Indians, both Christians and Peyotists believe themselves superior to the Whites. Their meek and agreeable role is a mask which is dropped the moment the Whites are out of sight. They take satisfaction in the success of their deception, in the gullibility of the Whites. They manipulate the Whites and further prove their superiority. But this is probably not enough to supply adequate satisfaction, there is a future date at which the tables will be turned. It is in this realm that both Christianity and Peyote perform an almost identical function.

C K 795 711 Because aggression is denied to both Christians and Peyotists alike, the non-aggression principles of the two faiths may be followed [829] and the Indians feel that they are true to their faith while the White man is not. This will of course alleviate any guilt feelings due to suppressed aggression. But if the White man sins and the Indian does not then there is justice for the Christian in heaven and for both C K 779 795 faiths, justice in the judgement day. The Peyotists' judgement day may be one trait taken bodily from Christian doctrine in tact. The descriptions I have had given me by Peyotists bode no good for Whites, and toned down as they are for my ears, the tone of voice is just a C K [129] little unnerving. Moreover, Peyotists take every opportunity to mention this coming of the end to me in ominous tones and say that they are sure I get the point. Peyote symbolism has clothed the judgement C K 779 795 533 829 day in Peyote clothes. During a normal ceremony the eagle bone whistle is blown within the tipi towards the east (passing out through the entrance). At the day of judgement the procedure will be reversed. The whistle (like Gabriel's horn I am told) will blow outside the tipi from the east toward the west. It will pass through the tipi passing out the rear of the tipi. The description of the strength and tone of that whistle is quite eerie. I have not been able to get many statements on the subject from Christians but only hints here and there.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

115 malevolent spirits of the dead and the Medicine of the potential eagle doctor.
159 Kardiner's (1945:93) observation that, among the Comanche, "Medicine" is
756 merely a euphemism for "courage" is pertinent, for the ghost's major weapon
775 against the neophyte doctor is fear. It is interesting that although the behavior
[171] engaged in during these four days and nights of solitude is similar to the general pattern of Plains vision questing, Sanapia conceives of this time as merely a final test and not a time when a supernatural patron could have possibly appeared
[825] to her and granted her certain supernatural prerogatives. The apparition of her
[787] patron, the eagle, would come later in her career as a doctor. In the beginning of
[778] her doctoring career, the powers which she possessed came strictly from a personal power transmission from her mother and uncle to her. Sanapia feels that visitations from either the eagle, or at times from the spirits of her mother and uncle, are gifts granted her as a reward for her faith and conscientious endeavors as a doctor.

Power Transmission

115 The first stage in the actual power transmission from the mother was
159 concerned with instilling power into Sanapia's mouth and hands, the areas of
756 the body where an eagle doctor's powers are most strongly represented. The rituals
[826] involved with this first phase of transmission are very similar to the blessing ceremony, at least in the introductory stages. Sanapia's brother was told by the mother to lay a fire of pecan wood. After the wood burned to coals, the brother
[823] brought the coals to a secluded place where Sanapia and her mother waited. The mother sat facing east, and Sanapia was instructed to sit facing her, while the mound of coals burned between them. Sanapia was cedared[1] and fanned by her
[533] mother with the standard blessings of long life and good health. This blessing also included the mother's singing of her Medicine song, an action which serves
115 to call the *puhakut*'s power sources to his service. The mother, using her bare
159 hand, then plucked a live coal from the mound of embers and handed it to Sanapia.
756 At first, Sanapia reports, she balked at placing the burning coal in her hand, but at
787 her mother's insistence she took it and was amazed that it did not burn her. She was then instructed to rub the coal over her hands. Once again the similarity in the concepts of "Medicine" and "courage" appear. Today, Sanapia interprets the handling of live coals as an act of faith in the doctor, a necessary first step in testing the potential doctor's resolve.

> I was sure scared then . . . almost got up and ran away. I was only a young girl at that time, you know. But, when I took them coals on my hand, inside and outside my hand I felt a chill, maybe. Oh, it was like chills in my hands. That has the meaning that power was in there . . . working in my hands. Felt like it would go up my arm even.

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[1] The dried leaves of the red cedar are sprinkled on live coals, and the rising smoke is wafted over the person who is being blessed.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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fanning passes over the front and back of the body from the waist down. Sanapia prays that her patient may live a long, healthy life as she fans him and that all evil will be blown away from the patient by the motion of the feather. She explains that she has the power of the eagle; and when she touches a person with her Medicine feather, it is as if the eagle were touching them, instilling in them some of its Medicine. Her feather carries with it the tabus associated with her other medicine articles. However, a specific emphasis was placed by her mother on the prohibition of taking the Medicine feather into a room or area in which there is a large group of people.

> That eagle got some kind of power that I use for Medicine. I got one eagle feather, and it is really powerful, that thing. And I believe it. I done many works with that feather. I believe it.

Indian Lard

"Indian lard" is the name Sanapia applies to tallow or rendered beef fat. She uses it as a general purpose salve, though she states that it is especially efficacious in the treatment of severe burns. Also, it is her only remedy for constipation. Two or three tablespoonsful of lukewarm liquified tallow are administered to a patient with constipation.

Mouth Wash

The majority of cases which Sanapia treats involve the sucking operation. When the sucking is completed, Sanapia requires something to kill the "poison" and the disagreeable taste which is left in her mouth. Her mother used kerosene; however, Sanapia prefers a commercial brand of mouth wash and carries a small bottle of it in her medicine kit.

Red Paint

The red paint used by Sanapia is obtained by grinding and powdering a dark red clay which she finds west of Geary, Oklahoma. The paint is reconstituted by mixing it with water or tallow.

The paint is ever present in all of her blessing ceremonies. She also uses this paint at the termination of her treatment of ghost sickness. On the last day of treatment, she paints the patient's face, lower arms, and lower legs. The patient is instructed to wear the paint for two days before washing it off.

Sanapia states that painting is a prayer to the earth. The red paint is obtained from the earth and is the color of the earth. When she applies it to her patient she is asking the earth to care for him.

> The earth . . . talk to it like a mother. They call it that. Say "Watch this man, or woman, or child. They walking on you, same color as you, they you child. You can see that. Watch out for them during the long time they got to be on you."

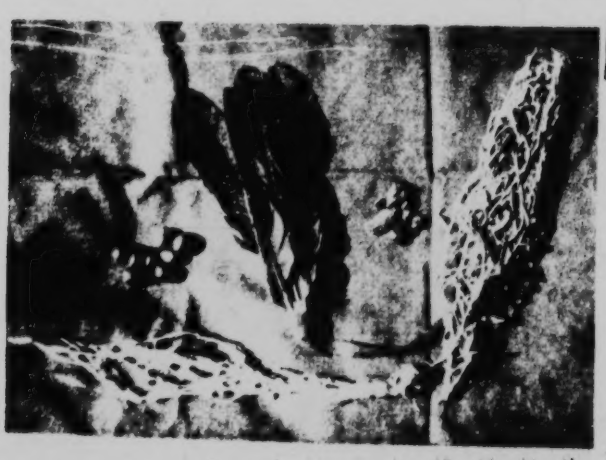
31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

However, these plants are believed to possess a high degree of power by their nature and are therefore not so dependent on the earth and the sun for power.

In the fall when Sanapia judges that the sun is growing weaker and is less able to give power to the medicine plants, she begins her medicine plant collection. She feels she is then obtaining the medicines at their peak of maturity. In the case of my investigation of Sanapia, her collecting time fell in late October and early November. The later the summer and fall, the more efficacious the medicine plants will be since they have been exposed to the sun for an added amount of time.

For the most part the plants which Sanapia uses grow in sandy soil. She denies that medicine plants can be obtained from any other type of soil. *Basiwa:pi* is the word which Sanapia applies to this type of soil, and she translates the word as "sandy," "sandy ground;" or "best ground."

Sanapia follows a fairly rigid field preparation of the medicine plants she collects. As soon as possible after extracting them from the earth, they are taken to the nearest body of flowing water, where they are cut into manipulatable sizes and washed. Upon returning to her house, she once again washes the medicines and then stores them in the storm cellar, suspending some from lines which traverse the cellar and placing the remainder in jars. The immersion in flowing water applies to roots or plant parts other than leaves or flowering bodies;



Bottom: sweet sage. Left to right: mescal beans, chow feather amulet, charcoal from peyote drum, gray sage.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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4

Ghosts and Ghost Sickness

Comanche Attitudes toward Ghosts

WALLACE AND HOEBEL (1952:173) write concerning the Comanches' attitudes toward ghosts: "Ghosts did not generally bother the Comanches, but the Comanches were definitely uneasy about them." Kardiner (1945:84) states that the Comanches have no ghost fear at all. I found that not only did my older Comanche informants feel uneasy about ghosts but in most cases they were terrified by them. In almost every interview with a Comanche informant, some situation was cited that dealt with the horrors which ghosts are capable of afflicting on the living.

Sanapia states that the whirlwinds, or "dust devils," common in southern Oklahoma are the only form which the ghosts take which is entirely visible to the human eye. In addition this is the only form by which the ghost will make his presence known during daylight hours. The nocturnal guise of the ghost is probably humanlike, in Sanapia's opinion, though she states that she has never seen a ghost at night. This fact is irksome to her because she believes herself to be an expert on the matter of ghosts and their behavior among the Comanches. She considers the lack of this experience as a major flaw in her background, though she accounts for it by mentioning the fear which her Medicine inspires in ghosts. The following is her description of an attempt she made to meet a ghost:

> I tried it on a real dark night. I took my flashlight and walked from here to the highway. The darkest night. That's what I supposed to do because the ghost hates me and I hate it. He ain't never going to do nothing to me because I'm going to overpower that ghost. I could kill it, and the things that it done to a person. He won't do that to me because I got that Medicine. So I walk here to the highway the darkest night. They say there's ghost on the road, but I never did see any. I went to the highway, and then I come back. I just wanted to try. If there was a ghost, I never did hear one, I never see one. Nothing touch me, nothing in my way. I just wanted to see how it was for them to scare

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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775 755 756 782 [276] then unwraps her medicines and exposes them on the cloth in which they were wrapped.

Both Sanapia and her patient smoke Bull Durham tobacco wrapped in corn shucks as they wait for the sun to rise. Sanapia prays to the earth immediately before sunrise, and when the sun appears, she directs her prayers to it.

> In the morning, before the sun come up, you go out away from the house, where nobody can hear you and you pray. You touch the ground with your hands, four times, and say . . . I don't know where it came from, but you say, "Mother earth, I want you to take my words. I want you to do what I want. I'm walking over you. I live on you, and I love you because you're my land." Say things like that to it. That sun not up yet. But it's the big eagle . . . talk to it like it's eagle . . . think of it like that, you know. It's going to fly up pretty soon when the sun comes up, and that's the eagle going to do everything I want.

776 821 823 The sun and the earth were the two greatest sources of power in the nomadic Comanche culture. Wallace and Hoebel (1952:190) write that ". . . only the sun, moon, and earth were looked upon as semi-dieties." They were also personified and addressed in prayer. The earth was considered second only to the sun in supernatural importance by the Comanches; however, though they were active in the affairs of men, neither the sun nor the earth gave personal power (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:195–197). Also in the content of the pages just cited are numerous mentions of the earth being addressed as "mother" by the Comanches. Kardiner (1945:63), when discussing Comanche beliefs associated with magic and power, writes: "The greatest powers were the earth, and the sun, with which the eagle was felt to be associated."

775 755 756 782 When the sun appears over the horizon, Sanapia begins her prayers in which she will ask "the eagle" to aid her in healing her patient. The patient, seated beside her, is instructed to pray for his recovery and to put his faith and trust in the powers of the earth and sun. She also indicates her medicines, exposed to the sun, and asks that it will fill them with power.

This period of prayer, first to the earth and then to the rising sun, lasts [372] about half an hour, or until the sun has completely cleared the horizon. Sanapia then takes her patient back to her house, where her hubsnd or son have already prepared the pecan wood coals which Sanapia will need when she begins to doctor. [824] Pecan coals are desired because they form long-burning, even coals. At this time 237 she will attach her crow feather amulet to a beam on her front porch. She some- [778] times affixes several crow feathers to her patient's wrist.

As mentioned previously, in doctoring, Sanapia is alone with her patient. 775 If she is in a tent or tepee, she sits on the south side of the tent, which is custom- 755 arily facing east, and positions her patient directly in front of her. He lies on his 756 back with his head toward the west. The medicines she will use are placed to [823] her right, and the pecan coals are placed in an iron kettle or shovel so their position can be changed as Sanapia doctors. When she is in a house, she attempts to duplicate these conditions as closely as possible.

After her patient is situated, Sanapia begins her attempt to mobilize her